

**LEMON GROVE CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Item No. 2
Mtg. Date January 20, 2015
Dept. City Manager's Office

Item Title: Public Safety Focus Group Priorities

Staff Contact: Graham Mitchell, City Manager

Recommendation:

Receive report and provide feedback.

Item Summary:

At its December 16, 2014 meeting, the City Council received a report from the Public Safety Focus Group. Focus group members presented several public safety challenges and seventeen strategies that were identified and developed through several focus group meetings. These challenges and strategies addressed the two focus areas developed by the City Council.

On December 16th, the City Council asked the focus group to reconvene to prioritize the seventeen identified strategies. On January 5, 2015, the focus group met. The staff report (**Attachment A**) provides a summary of the prioritization of the strategies.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Environmental Review:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not subject to review | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Declaration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exemption, Section <u> </u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Mitigated Negative Declaration |

Public Information:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter article | <input type="checkbox"/> Notice to property owners within 300 ft. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notice published in local newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood meeting | |

Attachments:

A. Staff Report

LEMON GROVE CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Item No. 2

Mtg. Date January 20, 2015

Item Title: **Public Safety Focus Group Priorities**

Staff Contact: Graham Mitchell, City Manager

Discussion:

At its December 16, 2014 meeting, the City Council received a report from the Public Safety Focus Group. Focus group members presented several public safety challenges and seventeen strategies that were identified and developed through several focus group meetings. These challenges and strategies addressed the two focus areas developed by the City Council:

- 1) Provide strategies to address public safety and the perception of safety in the City's commercial corridors; and
- 2) Provide strategies to address the drain on public resources responding to group homes/sober living facilities.

On December 16th, the City Council asked the focus group to reconvene to prioritize the seventeen identified strategies. On January 5, 2015, the focus group met; this staff report provides a summary of the prioritization of the strategies.

In their assessment, focus group members scored the various strategies on "impact" and "cost." Those strategies with a "high impact/low cost" combination moved to the top of the prioritization list for the most part. Strategies with "low impact" or "high costs" tended to move to the bottom of the list. During the prioritization process, some of the strategies were modified from what was originally presented and some strategies were combined. The focus group categorized the strategies into three groups: top priorities (8), moderate priorities (4), and low priorities (2).

Top Priorities

The top priority addresses lack of community involvement in being part of public safety solutions. The focus group combined three related strategies into its top priority:

- 1) Host community-wide workshops (perhaps organized in conjunction with PTA groups and senior groups) to address how the community can become more involved in volunteering, reporting crimes, and using the Sheriff's website to report non-emergency crimes. Marketing materials such as magnets and other items can promote "see something, say something" types of campaigns. The City can engage students in developing promotional materials.

The next two priorities relate to excessive calls for service from treatment centers and sober/independent living homes.

- 2) Reach out to the owners of properties that experience high volumes of public safety calls. Help these owners understand the impact they have on the community and offer resources to assist them (sample lease agreements, referrals to professional organizations, etc.).

Attachment A

- 3) Establish penalties for properties that require higher than average levels of public safety service. NOTE: After the focus group meeting, staff determined that this strategy as presented is not legal—cities cannot legally charge for general government services in such a manner. As such, staff suggests that those properties that demand high levels of public safety service be considered as candidates for nuisance abatement properties. For those properties that qualify as nuisance properties, this strategy will allow the City to recover costs associated with the nuisance.

The last five top priorities address the challenge of the physical environment in the commercial corridors.

- 4) Expand the Crime Free Multi-Housing program to apartment complexes near the commercial corridors. It is hoped that this program will help property owners evict tenants who are sources of crime and attracting crime.
- 5) Create a program for commercial properties that is similar to the Crime Free Multi-Housing program, in that it provides training to property owners on how to better ensure their properties do not attract criminal activity.
- 6) Create a volunteer program in which a volunteer crew provides routine cleanup services in the City's commercial areas.
- 7) Establish an information "kiosk" located at the Main Street Promenade and operated by volunteers to serve as a location to obtain information about the City, how to report crime, community activities, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- 8) Rely on security guards to ensure a more visible law enforcement presence.

Moderate Priorities

The focus group categorized four of the strategies as moderate priorities. These strategies are listed below in no particular order:

- 1) Activate more neighborhood watch programs throughout the City—especially in areas that have higher crime occurrences. The group felt that using crime data could help target neighborhoods of focus.
- 2) Encourage commercial property owners to enforce "no trespassing" on their properties.
- 3) Develop a program that encourages residents and visitors to participate in local food bank programs rather than providing money to panhandlers.
- 4) Require all rental housing units to obtain a business license. This would potentially allow the City to enforce certain standards for rental housing. This action would require a voter approval through a municipal election.

Low Priorities

Two strategies were rated as low priorities, primarily because of their vagueness:

- 1) Eliminate design defaults that attract nuisances.
- 2) Proactively use code enforcement in commercial areas.

Conclusion:

Staff recommends that the City Council consider the list of strategies presented by the Public Safety Focus Group. Staff suggests that the higher priority strategies be considered as part of the upcoming City Council priority setting workshop, the Fiscal Year 2014-15 mid-year budget discussions, and/or the Fiscal Year 2015-16 budget discussions.